



**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

What is the purpose of the Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal project?

Washington State Ferry's (WSF) stated mission is to provide safe, reliable, and efficient marine transportation for people and goods throughout the Puget Sound. In keeping with this mission, the purpose of the Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Project is to:

- improve terminal operations, including circulation, local traffic, safety, and security for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists;
- improve access for ferry passengers to rail, bus, and other modes of transportation;
- accommodate projected growth in the numbers of passengers and vehicles on the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route;

WSF must achieve these objectives in a manner consistent with their goals to reduce operational costs and increase revenue. Additionally, WSF strives to be a partner with the local community to integrate project objectives with community plans, goals and objectives.

Why is the project needed?

The Mukilteo Multimodal Ferry Terminal Project is needed because of several deficiencies at the existing terminal, including:

- The existing terminal does not accommodate efficient and safe ferry operations and cannot meet future ferry safety and security requirements.
- The existing terminal does not improve access for ferry passengers to other transportation choices, including rail and bus connections.
- The existing terminal cannot accommodate projected growth and an assigned third boat on the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route.

Each of these needs is explained in more detail below.

Need for efficient and safe ferry operations

Few improvements have been made at the Mukilteo Ferry Terminal since it was built in 1952. WSF extended the existing timber dock in 1981 into deeper water, and then expanded the holding area from 85 cars to its current 110-car holding configuration in 1992. The existing timber dock is nearing the end of its useful life and needs major repairs. To maintain reliable service, the existing timber dock and the vehicle transfer span need to be replaced within the next 10 years.

Because the existing terminal configuration crosses a local street, the ability to separate ferry traffic from local traffic is limited. WSF manages a five-way public intersection during every loading and unloading operation, which is difficult and inefficient. Staging areas for priority transit, carpools and commercial freight are inadequate and unsafe. In addition, because there is

only one ferry slip, the entire route must be shut down if the existing single slip is damaged or requires major maintenance.

The existing ferry vehicle holding area is too small to accommodate existing or projected needs. The existing vehicle holding area at the terminal accommodates 110 vehicles, which is less than one boatload. This results in inefficiencies of loading operations at the tollbooth because sales must stop before a full boatload is sold, and traffic cannot be distributed into special categories such as motorcycles, carpools, and freight to load on the vessel quickly and efficiently.

Due to demand on Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route, backups on the SR 525 shoulder holding area interfere with local traffic. During peak ferry periods, vehicles waiting to board a ferry back up (queue) through the existing vehicle holding area into a lane for ferry traffic along the SR 525 shoulder. During peak periods, the queue can extend beyond the length of this shoulder lane for approximately 2 to 3 miles south from the terminal. This causes congestion, making local traffic circulation difficult.

The existing terminal does not provide adequate space for a secure, fenced boundary around the vehicles and passengers waiting to board the ferry. Federal security requirements for vessel and terminal operations are increasing, and improvements are needed in the vehicle holding area and loading operations to assist WSF in implementing these new requirements.

The proposed project would improve ferry terminal operations and result in better traffic circulation, safety, and security for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and freight transport. This would also help to reduce operation and maintenance costs.

Need for access to other transportation choices

While buses, bicycles, and pedestrians currently use the ferry terminal, the existing facility lacks the physical space to accommodate good pedestrian connections to buses and the proposed Sound Transit commuter rail station. The site is physically constrained from providing safe and efficient connections to other transportation choices. Vehicles, bicyclists, and foot passengers must load the ferry using the same ramp as vehicles, which is unsafe, slow, and inefficient.

Safety features of the new terminal would facilitate use of the transportation network by pedestrians and bicyclists. The proximity to the proposed Sound Transit commuter rail station (Mukilteo Sounder Station) would facilitate rail access. The new transit center integrated into this project would let riders connect easily with Community Transit, Everett Transit, carpools, and vanpools; and a new parking structure would facilitate connections to these high occupancy vehicle systems.

Need to accommodate projected growth

The Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route is one of the busiest routes in WSF's fleet and has the third largest annual ridership. This route carries nearly 6,000 vehicles each day between Mukilteo and Whidbey Island. WSF estimates that by 2030 this route will have a 67 percent increase in total passenger ridership and 47 percent increase in vehicle ridership.

The location of the existing terminal is too small to handle current traffic and the growing demand for service. The most recent long-range forecast for travel demand on the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route anticipates approximately 6.7 million passengers and 3.2 million vehicles

annually in 2030. The existing vehicle holding area does not have enough capacity to hold even one full boatload of vehicles.

Projected demand for ferry service on the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route indicates that a third boat will be necessary by 2022. In 2003, there were an estimated 2,230 passengers, on average, during the four-hour westbound afternoon peak commute period and an estimated 1,248 vehicles, on average, in the same direction during that same time period. By 2030, passenger ridership is estimated to grow to 6,200 total passengers (for both directions) during the afternoon peak and 2,800 vehicles (for both directions) during the afternoon peak. Currently, two ferry boats are assigned to the route and sailings occur every 30 minutes. To accommodate the demand for service projected by 2030, a third boat has been planned for the Mukilteo-Clinton ferry route to allow sailings every 20 minutes.

To operate a 20-minute sailing schedule safely and efficiently, WSF needs a terminal with at least two slips, an overhead passenger loading facility, and a holding area able to accommodate two boatloads (260 vehicles). These improvements cannot be accomplished on the current terminal site without major effects to adjoining private properties, public parks and local traffic patterns.

Other WSF Objectives

City Coordination

Relocating the ferry terminal would increase the commercial and retail potential for Mukilteo's downtown waterfront area, a long-term vision of the City. The project would also greatly improve public access to the waterfront and reduce traffic impacts on the local community.

WSF Business Plan Goals

In 2002, WSF adopted a new strategic plan to provide a sustainable future for the WSF system. The WSF business plan component of the strategic plan focuses on the operational elements of the ferry system budget, which would result in greater efficiencies, new sources of revenue such as advertising, upgraded retail and concessions, and predictable fare increases. In conformance with its business plan, WSF would incorporate retail and concessions into the new terminal. Revenue from these commercial activities would help cover operating costs and thus keep ferry fares within reach of customers. Also in conformance with the plan, WSF must pursue developments of the project to reduce costs, especially long-term operations and maintenance costs.